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## Biblical Notes.

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**Christianity and the "Diaspora."** In Plummer's suggestive book on "St. James and St. Jude," occur some interesting remarks on this topic. The Dispersion "showed to both Jew and Gentile alike that the barriers which had hedged in and isolated the hermit nation had broken down, and that what had ceased to be thus isolated had changed its character. A *kingdom* had become a *religion*. What henceforth distinguished the Jews in the eyes of all the world was not their country or their government, but their creed. "Through this they were henceforth to influence men as under the old conditions was impossible." "They themselves also were forced to understand their own religion better. When the keeping of the letter of the law became an impossibility, they were compelled to penetrate into its spirit." The universality of the services of the synagogue taught the Jew that God's worship was not confined to Jerusalem, and their simplicity attracted proselytes. Even in matters of detail, the lessons, the singing, the ritual—the services of the synagogue prepared for the services of the Christian church.

**The Man of Sin: 2 Thess. 2: 1-12.** Professor Findlay has an appendix on this important theme in his Cambridge Bible volume on the Epistles to the Thessalonians. His purpose is to trace the historical outline of the doctrine of Antichrist in Scripture and in the belief and teaching of the church. He finds the beginnings of it in Daniel's prophecies concerning Antiochus Epiphanes. The Targum of Jonathan speaks of a certain Armillus who seems to be the Jewish antichrist and this fact may point to a pre-Christian Jewish doctrine which will explain the rapid development which the conception receives in the New Testament. After calling attention to the idea as it appears in the Apocalypse, he comes to its development in Church history. It passed through four stages. In the Early Church Antichrist was thought to be an individual destined one day to overthrow the Roman Empire and establish a rule of consummate wickedness, terminated by the second coming of Christ. Some thought that Heresy was meant. In the middle ages the Greeks saw the "lawless one" in Mohammed; in the west the growing arrogance of the Bishops of Rome and the traditional connection of Antichrist with Rome united to suggest the idea of a Papal Antichrist. It was Luther's firm conviction that the Papal system was the Antichrist of prophecy. Two reasons forbid it, though it contains large elements of truth, (1) St. Paul's words can be true only of an individual not of a succession of men or a system; (2) his "man of lawlessness" is to be the avowed opposer and displacer of God, to apply which words to the Papacy would seriously weaken and distort them. In modern times, the French Revolution and its climax in Napoleon Buonaparte has been thought to fulfil the prophecy. The positivism of Auguste Comte is likewise so considered. We must regard this prophecy as having a progressive fulfilment through all these incidents and events of history. It seems as though the present age portends some world-wide spiritual crisis, but it is not for us to know times and seasons.